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AN EXPRESSION FOR THE SURFACE OF AN ELLIPSOID IN TERMS OF WEIERSTRASS'S ELLIPTIC FUNCTIONS.*

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It is proposed in this paper to give a simpler solution of a problem already solved by Weierstrass (Schwarz) and others.

The equation to the surface of an ellipsoid being

$$\frac{x^2}{a^2} + \frac{y^2}{b^2} + \frac{z^2}{c^2} = 1, \quad (1)$$

any point of it may be defined by the equations

$$\frac{x^2}{a^2} = \frac{(a^2 - u)(a^2 - v)}{(b^2 - a^2)(c^2 - a^2)}, \quad \frac{y^2}{b^2} = \frac{(b^2 - u)(b^2 - v)}{(a^2 - b^2)(c^2 - b^2)}, \quad \frac{z^2}{c^2} = \frac{(c^2 - u)(c^2 - v)}{(a^2 - c^2)(b^2 - c^2)}, \quad (2)$$

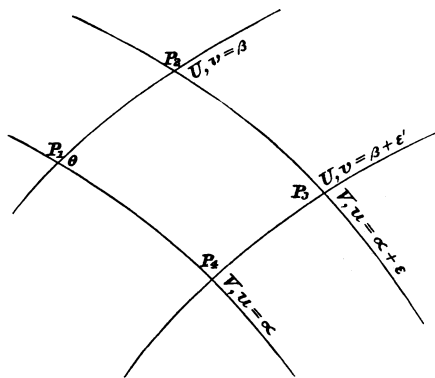
in which u and v are independent variables, called the "elliptic coordinates" of the point (x, y, z) .†

Now the element of any surface defined by

$$x = f_1(u, v), \quad y = f_2(u, v), \quad z = f_3(u, v), \quad (3)$$

in which f_1, f_2, f_3 are algebraic functions, may be expressed as follows:—

We suppose the surface defined by equations (3) has in it two systems of curves U and V . It is also supposed that the curves in each system U and V are consecutive; i. e. are indefinitely near to each other. Let there be two curves of the system U indefinitely near to each other, along each of which v is constant, viz. $v = \beta, \beta + \epsilon$, respectively, where ϵ is an infinitesimal of the first order; also, let there be two curves of the system V , indefinitely near to each other, for which u has the two constant values $u = \alpha, \alpha + \epsilon$, respectively. Let the point $(u = \alpha, v = \beta)$ be represented



* Read before the New York Mathematical Society, June 4, 1892.

† Joachimsthal's *Anwendung der Differential- und Integral-rechnung auf die allgemeine Theorie der Flächen*. § 68, p. 136.

by P_1 , ($u = \alpha + \epsilon$, $v = \beta$) by P_2 , ($u = \alpha + \epsilon$, $v = \beta + \epsilon'$) by P_3 , ($u = \alpha$, $v = \beta + \epsilon'$) by P_4 . Then, since the curves are indefinitely near, the surface-element $P_1P_2P_3P_4$ may be regarded as a plane parallelogram (omitting infinitesimals of the second order), and its area will be $P_1P_2 \cdot P_1P_4 \sin \theta$. If the coordinates of P_1 be x, y, z , those of P_2 are

$$x + \frac{\partial x}{\partial u} du, \quad y + \frac{\partial y}{\partial u} du, \quad z + \frac{\partial z}{\partial u} du;$$

and of P_4 ,

$$x + \frac{\partial x}{\partial v} dv, \quad y + \frac{\partial y}{\partial v} dv, \quad z + \frac{\partial z}{\partial v} dv.$$

Hence the values of $\cos \theta$, P_1P_2 , P_1P_4 , and the surface-element dL are

$$\begin{aligned} \cos \theta &= \frac{\overline{P_1P_2}^2 + \overline{P_1P_4}^2 - \overline{P_2P_4}^2}{2P_1P_2 \cdot P_1P_4} = \frac{E}{\sqrt{FG}}, \\ P_1P_2 &= \sqrt{F} \cdot du, \\ P_1P_4 &= \sqrt{G} \cdot dv, \\ dL &= \sqrt{FG - E^2} \cdot du \, dv; \end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} E &= \frac{\partial x}{\partial u} \cdot \frac{\partial x}{\partial v} + \frac{\partial y}{\partial u} \cdot \frac{\partial y}{\partial v} + \frac{\partial z}{\partial u} \cdot \frac{\partial z}{\partial v}, \\ F &= \left[\frac{\partial x}{\partial u} \right]^2 + \left[\frac{\partial y}{\partial u} \right]^2 + \left[\frac{\partial z}{\partial u} \right]^2, \\ G &= \left[\frac{\partial x}{\partial v} \right]^2 + \left[\frac{\partial y}{\partial v} \right]^2 + \left[\frac{\partial z}{\partial v} \right]^2. \end{aligned}$$

Since dL is the surface-element for the surface defined by equations (3), we may employ the expression for dL in (4) in the case of the ellipsoid by taking, instead of f_1, f_2, f_3 , the values of x, y, z obtained from equations (2); then construct the *partial differential expressions* E, F, G ; and finally $\sqrt{FG - E^2}$; whence

$$\begin{aligned} L &= \iint \sqrt{FG - E^2} \cdot du \cdot dv \\ &= \frac{1}{4} \iint \frac{(u-v) \cdot u \cdot v \cdot du \, dv}{\sqrt{(u-a^2)(u-b^2)(u-c^2)u} \sqrt{(v-a^2)(v-b^2)(v-c^2)v}}, \end{aligned} \tag{5}$$

in which compatible with (1) and (2), there always exist the relations $a^2 > u > b^2 > v > c^2$.

We shall now show that (5) can be expressed in terms of σ - and p -functions.

Let

$$\begin{aligned}\varphi(t) &= (t-a^2)(t-b^2)(t-c^2)t \\ &= At^4 + 4Bt^3 + 6Ct^2 + 4Dt + R,\end{aligned}\quad (6)$$

where

$$C = \frac{1}{6}(b^2c^2 + c^2a^2 + a^2b^2), \quad D = -\frac{1}{4}a^2b^2c^2, \quad R = 0;$$

then taking a new variable s such that

$$s = \frac{1}{2}C + \frac{D}{t}, \quad \text{or} \quad t = \frac{D}{s-s_0},$$

where $s_0 = \frac{1}{2}C$, one may easily verify

$$\frac{dt}{\sqrt{\pm \varphi(t)}} = \frac{ds}{\sqrt{\pm S}}, \quad (7)$$

where

$$S = 4(s-e_1)(s-e_2)(s-e_3), \quad \frac{dt}{ds} > 0,$$

and

$$\begin{aligned}e_1 &= \frac{1}{2}C + \frac{D}{a^2} = \frac{1}{12}(a^2b^2 - 2b^2c^2 + c^2a^2), \\ e_2 &= \frac{1}{2}C + \frac{D}{b^2} = \frac{1}{12}(b^2c^2 - 2c^2a^2 + a^2b^2), \\ e_3 &= \frac{1}{2}C + \frac{D}{c^2} = \frac{1}{12}(c^2a^2 - 2a^2b^2 + b^2c^2), \\ e_1 + e_2 + e_3 &= 0.\end{aligned}\quad (8)$$

Therefore, multiplying (7) separately by $t = \frac{D}{s-s_0}$ and $t^2 = \frac{D^2}{(s-s_0)^2}$, and integrating between the limits b^2 and t , which correspond to the limits e_2 and s , we obtain the transformations

$$\begin{aligned}\int_{b^2}^t \frac{tdt}{\sqrt{\pm \varphi(t)}} &= \int_{e_2}^s \frac{D}{s-s_0} \cdot \frac{ds}{\sqrt{\pm S}}, \\ \int_{b^2}^t \frac{t^2dt}{\sqrt{\pm \varphi(t)}} &= \int_{e_2}^s \frac{D^2}{(s-s_0)^2} \frac{ds}{\sqrt{\pm S}};\end{aligned}\quad (9)$$

and if we suppose s to take the values s_1, s_2 , when t takes the values u, v , respectively, as in (5), then

$$s_1 = s_0 + \frac{D}{u}, \quad s_2 = s_0 + \frac{D}{v};$$

and from the inequalities $c^2 < v < b^2 < u < a^2$, with the fact that D is negative in (8), we have the conditions

$$e_3 < s_2 < e_2 < s_1 < e_1 < s_0 < \infty. \quad (11)$$

Also, placing

$$\begin{aligned} V_1 &= \int_{e_2}^{s_1} \frac{D}{s - s_0} \frac{ds}{\sqrt{-S}}, & V_2 &= \int_{s_2}^{e_2} \frac{D}{s - s_0} \frac{ds}{\sqrt{S}}, \\ V_3 &= \int_{e_2}^{s_1} \frac{D^2}{(s - s_0)^2} \frac{ds}{\sqrt{-S}}, & V_4 &= \int_{s_2}^{e_2} \frac{D^2}{(s - s_0)^2} \frac{ds}{\sqrt{S}}; \end{aligned} \quad (12)$$

there exist the relations

$$V_3 = D \frac{\partial V_1}{\partial s_0}, \quad V_4 = D \frac{\partial V_2}{\partial s_0}; \quad (13)$$

hence (5) with the aid of (9), (10), (12), (13) can be put in the form

$$\psi(s_0, s_1, s_2) = V_3 V_2 - V_1 V_4 = D \left[\frac{\partial V_1}{\partial s_0} \cdot V_2 - V_1 \frac{\partial V_2}{\partial s_0} \right], \quad (14)$$

where $\psi(s_0, s_1, s_2)$ represents the half of the ellipsoid above the xy -plane.

We shall now use the Weierstrass definition of the p -function:—*

If

$$u = \int_z^\infty \frac{ds}{\sqrt{4s^3 - g_2 s - g_3}} = \int_z^\infty \frac{ds}{\sqrt{4(s - e_1)(s - e_2)(s - e_3)}},$$

in which $e_1 > e_2 > e_3$ and $e_1 + e_2 + e_3 = 0$, then $z = p u$.

Hence, if we put $i = \sqrt{-1}$ and write †

$$\begin{aligned} w &= \int_{s_0}^\infty \frac{ds}{\sqrt{S}} = \int_{-\infty}^0 \frac{dt}{\sqrt{\varphi(t)}}, \\ \omega_2 &= \int_{e_2}^\infty \frac{ds}{\sqrt{S}}, \\ k_1 &= \int_{e_2}^{s_1} \frac{ds}{\sqrt{-S}} = \int_{b^2}^u \frac{dt}{\sqrt{-\varphi(t)}}, \\ k_2 &= \int_{s_2}^{e_2} \frac{ds}{\sqrt{S}} = \int_v^{b^2} \frac{dt}{\sqrt{\varphi(t)}}; \end{aligned} \quad (15)$$

* See Enneper's *Elliptische Functionen*, § 6; or Halphen's *Fonctions Elliptiques* Ch. III, (1), (2).

† An accent written before a sign of integration indicates that the path of integration on the complex-plane is a straight line.

we shall have

$$\omega_2 - k_1 i = \int_{s_1}^{\infty} \frac{ds}{\sqrt{S}},$$

$$\omega_2 + k_2 = \int_{s_2}^{\infty} \frac{ds}{\sqrt{S}};$$

and

$$\left. \begin{aligned} s_0 &= p w, & e_2 &= p \omega_2, \\ s_1 &= p (\omega_2 - k_1 i), & s_2 &= p (\omega_2 + k_2). \end{aligned} \right\} \quad (16)$$

Using the relation $s_0 = p w$ in (14) we obtain

$$\phi(s_0, s_1, s_2) = \frac{D}{p'w} \left[\frac{\partial V_1}{\partial w} V_2 - V_1 \frac{\partial V_2}{\partial w} \right]. \quad (17)$$

We next transform the integrals in (12) to an independent variable k , where

$$s = p (\omega_2 + k), \quad \omega_2 + k = \int_s^{\infty} \frac{ds}{\sqrt{S}},$$

$$dk = \frac{-ds}{\sqrt{S}} = \frac{-ids}{\sqrt{-S}};$$

and, by (16), the limits e_2 and s_1 are to be replaced by 0, $-k_1 i$, and the limits e_2, s_2 by 0, k_2 ; whence

$$V_1 i = \int_0^{-k_1 i} \frac{Ddk}{p (\omega_2 + k) - p w}, \quad V_2 = \int_0^{k_2} \frac{Ddk}{p (\omega_2 + k) - p w}; \quad (18)$$

and, multiplying by $\frac{p'w}{D}$,

$$\frac{p'w}{D} i V_1 = \int_0^{-k_1 i} \frac{p'w dk}{p (\omega_2 + k) - p w}, = i I_1 \quad \text{say,}$$

$$\frac{p'w}{D} V_2 = \int_0^{k_2} \frac{p'w dk}{p (\omega_2 + k) - p w}, = I_2 \quad \text{“} \quad (19)$$

We next calculate iI_1 , I_2 , by means of the formula*

$$\begin{aligned} \int_0^k \frac{p'w dk}{p(w_2 + k) - pw} &= \log \frac{\sigma(w - \omega_2)}{\sigma(w + \omega_2)} - \log \frac{\sigma(w - \omega_2 + k)}{\sigma(w + \omega_2 - k)} + 2 \frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) \cdot k, \\ &= \log \frac{\sigma(w - \omega_2) \cdot \sigma(w - k + \omega_2)}{\sigma(w + k - \omega_2) \cdot \sigma(w + \omega_2)} + 2 \frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) \cdot k. \end{aligned}$$

Also, we have the transformation formulæ†

$$\begin{aligned} \sigma(w - \omega_2) &= -\sigma_2 w \cdot \sigma \omega_2 \cdot e^{-\eta_2 \cdot w}, \\ \sigma(w + \omega_2) &= \sigma_2 w \cdot \sigma \omega_2 \cdot e^{\eta_2 \cdot w}, \\ \sigma(w - k + \omega_2) &= \sigma_2(w - k) \cdot \sigma \omega_2 \cdot e^{\eta_2(w - k)}, \\ \sigma(w + k - \omega_2) &= -\sigma_2(w + k) \cdot \sigma \omega_2 \cdot e^{-\eta_2(w + k)}. \end{aligned}$$

Finally, after substituting these values in the expression just deduced for \int_0^k we shall have

$$\int_0^k \frac{p'w \cdot dk}{p(w_2 + k) - pw} = \log \frac{\sigma_2(w - k)}{\sigma_2(w + k)} + 2 \frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) \cdot k. \quad (20)$$

For the integrals iI_1 and I_2 of (19) the limits are respectively 0, $-k_1i$ and 0, k_2 ; whence, introducing these in (20), we obtain for the integrals of (19)

$$\begin{aligned} iI_1 &= \log \frac{\sigma_2(w + k_1i)}{\sigma_2(w - k_1i)} - 2 \frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) \cdot k_1i, \\ I_2 &= \log \frac{\sigma_2(w - k_2)}{\sigma_2(w + k_2)} + 2 \frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) \cdot k_2. \end{aligned} \quad (21)$$

Using the notation of (19) in (17), we have

$$\phi(s_0, s_1, s_2) = \left[\frac{\partial I_1}{\partial w} I_2 - I_1 \frac{\partial I_2}{\partial w} \right] \left[\frac{D}{p'w} \right]^3. \quad (22)$$

But from (15) and (6), (8)

$$\frac{dw}{ds_0} = \left[\frac{1}{\sqrt{S}} \right]_{s=s_0}, = \frac{1}{D};$$

* Weierstrass and Schwarz's Elliptic Function Formulæ, § 60, (1);

† § 18, (3).

and, from (16)

$$\frac{ds_0}{dw} = p'w ;$$

whence $p'w/D = 1$; and (22) becomes

$$\phi(s_0, s_1, s_2) = \frac{\partial I_1}{\partial w} I_2 - I_1 \frac{\partial I_2}{\partial w}. \quad (23)$$

From (21)

$$\begin{aligned} i \frac{\partial I_1}{\partial w} &= \frac{\sigma'_2}{\sigma_2} (w + k_1 i) - \frac{\sigma'_2}{\sigma_2} (w - k_1 i) + 2pw \cdot k_1 i, \\ \frac{\partial I_1}{\partial w} &= \frac{\sigma'_2}{\sigma_2} (w - k_2) - \frac{\sigma'_2}{\sigma_2} (w + k_2) - 2pw \cdot k_2. \end{aligned} \quad (24)$$

Again in (21) writing ω_3 for $-k_1 i$, and ω_1 for k_2 , and using Weierstrass's formula* connecting $\sigma_2(w + 2\omega_3)$ with $\sigma_2 w$, we obtain

$$\log \frac{\sigma_2(w - \omega_3)}{\sigma_2(w + \omega_3)} = \log \frac{\sigma_2(w - \omega_3)}{e^{2\eta_3 w} \sigma_2(w - \omega_3)} = -2\eta_3 w + 2n\pi i, \quad n = 0 ;$$

therefore

$$\begin{aligned} iI_1 &= -2\eta_3 w + 2n\pi i + 2 \frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) \cdot \omega_3, \quad n = 0, \\ I_2 &= -2\eta_1 w + 2 \frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) \cdot \omega_1 ; \end{aligned} \quad (25)$$

and

$$i \frac{\partial I_1}{\partial w} = -2(\eta_3 + pw \cdot \omega_3), \quad \frac{\partial I_2}{\partial w} = -2(\eta_1 + pw \cdot \omega_1); \quad (26)$$

whence from (23)

$$\phi(s_0, s_1, s_2) = \frac{4}{i} \begin{vmatrix} -\eta_1 w + \frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) \cdot \omega_1, & -\eta_3 w + \frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) \cdot \omega_3 \\ -\eta_1 - pw \cdot \omega_1, & -\eta_3 - pw \cdot \omega_3 \end{vmatrix}, \quad (27)$$

which, on subtracting w times the second row of the determinant from the first and factoring, becomes

$$\phi(s_0, s_1, s_2) = \frac{4}{i} \left[\frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) + w pw \right] \begin{vmatrix} \omega_1, & \omega_3 \\ -\eta_1 - pw \cdot \omega_1, & -\eta_3 - pw \cdot \omega_3 \end{vmatrix}, \quad (28)$$

* Weierstrass and Schwarz, p. 22, 3rd column.

But the determinant in (28) reduces to

$$\gamma_1 \omega_3 - \omega_1 \gamma_3 = \frac{1}{2} \pi i ; *$$

hence the total surface is

$$2 \psi(s_0, s_1, s_2) = 4\pi \left[\frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) + w \text{pw} \right]. \quad (29)$$

The method of computing $w = \int_0^\infty \frac{ds}{\sqrt{S}}$ may be found in treatises on Elliptic Functions, and the value of $\frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w)$ is obtained by taking the logarithmic differential of

$$\sigma w = e^{\frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{w\pi}{2\omega} \right)^2} \cdot \frac{2\omega}{\pi} \sin \frac{w\pi}{2\omega}, \dagger \quad (30)$$

while pw is given by the formula

$$\text{pw} = - \frac{d^2}{dw} \log \sigma w, \quad (31)$$

thus completing the theoretical discussion of the problem.

By way of example we may take the case of the sphere, $r = a = b = c$, and from (6) and (16)

$$w = \int_{-\infty}^0 \frac{dt}{\sqrt{\varphi(t)}} = \int_{-\infty}^0 \frac{dt}{(t-a^2) \sqrt{t(t-a^2)}}; \quad (32)$$

which on placing $\sqrt{t(t-a^2)} = z - t$, becomes

$$w = \int_{-\infty}^0 \frac{2dz}{(z-a^2)^2} = \frac{2}{a^2}. \quad (33)$$

But from (8), when $a = b = c$, then

$$e_1 = e_2 = e_3 = 0, \quad \text{and} \quad g_2 = g_3 = 0; \ddagger$$

whence it follows that

$$\frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) + w \text{pw} = \frac{2}{w} = \alpha_2, \S \quad (34)$$

and $2 \psi(s_0, s_1, s_2) = 4 \pi a^2$, the surface of the sphere.

* W. and S., § 7, (5).

† W. and S., § 6 (1) and § 7.

‡ Enneper, § 6, (21).

§ W. and S., § 8, (3); § 9, (6).

If $c = b$, then from (15) we shall have

$$w = \int_{-\infty}^0 \frac{dt}{(t-b^2)\sqrt{t^2-a^2t}}, \quad (35)$$

which, by putting $\sqrt{t^2-a^2t} = z - t$, becomes

$$w = \int_{-\infty}^0 \frac{2dz}{a^2b^2 - 2b^2z + z^2} = \left[\frac{2}{abe} \tan^{-1} \frac{z-b}{abe} \right]_{-\infty}^0, \quad (36)$$

$$w = -\frac{3\pi}{abe} + \frac{2}{abe} \tan^{-1} \frac{b}{ae};$$

and from (8)

$$e_1 = \frac{1}{8} a^2 b^2 e^2, \quad e_2 = e_3 = -\frac{1}{12} a^2 b^2 e^2. \quad (37)$$

Therefore

$$g_2 = 3e_1^2, \quad g_3 = e_1^3, \quad \left(\frac{2\omega}{\pi} \right)^2 = \frac{2g_2}{9g_3} = \frac{4}{a^2b^2e^2}. * \quad (38)$$

Weierstrass and Schwarz § 10, (1) and (3), furnish the equations

$$pw = \left[\frac{\pi}{2\omega} \right]^2 \frac{1}{\sin^2 \left[\frac{w\pi}{2\omega} \right]} - \frac{1}{3} \left[\frac{\pi}{2\omega} \right]^2,$$

$$\sigma'_{\sigma}(w) = \frac{\pi}{2\omega} \cot \frac{w\pi}{2\omega} + \frac{1}{3} \left[\frac{\pi}{2\omega} \right]^2 w; \quad (39)$$

$$\sigma'_{\sigma}(w) + w pw = \frac{\pi}{2\omega} \left[\frac{w\pi}{2\omega} \frac{1}{\sin^2 \left[\frac{w\pi}{2\omega} \right]} + \cot \frac{w\pi}{2\omega} \right]. \quad (40)$$

Multiplying (36) by $\frac{\pi}{2\omega} = \frac{abe}{2}$, we obtain

$$\frac{w\pi}{2\omega} = -\frac{3\pi}{2} + \tan^{-1} \frac{b}{ae}, \quad (41)$$

$$= -\frac{3\pi}{2} + \sin^{-1} \sqrt{1-e^2}; \quad (42)$$

whence,

$$\begin{aligned}\sin \frac{w\pi}{2\omega} &= + \cos \sin^{-1} \sqrt{1-e^2} = e, \\ \cos \frac{w\pi}{2\omega} &= \sqrt{1-e^2}, \\ \frac{w\pi}{2\omega} &= \sin^{-1} e, \\ \cot \frac{w\pi}{2\omega} &= \frac{\sqrt{1-e^2}}{e} = \frac{b}{ae}.\end{aligned}\tag{43}$$

Substituting these values for $\sin \frac{w\pi}{2\omega}$, $\frac{w\pi}{2\omega}$, $\cot \frac{w\pi}{2\omega}$, from (43), and $\frac{\pi}{2\omega} = \frac{abe}{2}$, from (38), in (40), we shall have

$$\frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) + w \operatorname{pw} = \frac{ab}{2e} \sin^{-1} e + \frac{b^2}{2};\tag{44}$$

and finally,

$$4\pi \left[\frac{\sigma'}{\sigma}(w) + w \operatorname{pw} \right] = 2\pi b^2 + 2\pi \frac{ab}{e} \sin^{-1} e,\tag{45}$$

the total surface of a spheroid.*

* See Williamson's *Integral Calculus* (1884), p. 258 (1).